Payment of dues to Indian Peacekeepers in UN duty

2241. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Indian Military personnel who were assigned peacekeeping duties in Somalia, Mozambique and Cambodia between 1991 and 1993 have retired,but the United Nations is yet to pay their allowances:

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government had taken up this matter with the United Nations:

(d) if so, the reaction of the United Nations in this regard; and

(e) if not, the steps taken by Government to pay the allowances due to these military personnel?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) No, Sir. As per records, there is not a single case where Armed Forces personnel deployed from India for peace keeping duties in United Nations peace keeping operations in Somalia, Mozambique and Cambodia between the period 1991 and 1993, have retired without being paid their allowances for peace keeping duties due from the United Nations.

The United Nations does not disburse overseas allowances for peace keeping duties directly to the troops. The gross allowance due is reimbursed by the United Nations to the country as troops costs, which is thereafter disbursed to the personnel through prescribed official channels.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

Drug for toxins of chemical attack

2242. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any drug has been developed to combat toxins of chemical attack; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Appropriate method of Medical protection against Chemical Warfare agents is to reduce their toxic effects. Different medical protections are available for different chemical warfare agents. For example indigenously available 2-PAM Chloride and Atropine are administered for nerve agents, and for Cyanides, Sodium Nitrate and SodiumThiosulphate are administered. No drug is known world over for sulphur mustard.

Abandoned ship detected by coast guard

2243. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem titled 'Was abandoned Lebanese ship AL-Qaeda's getaway vehicle' published in the Hindustan Times, dated 9th July, 2002;

(b) if so, the details in this regard and his reaction thereto;

(c) whether the ship was detected within the maritime zone of India, and whether it indicate security lapse on the part of the concerned agency; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to prevent recurrence of such lapses and to further strengthen the vigil on our coasts?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) A merchant ship reported sighting of an abandoned merchant ship 'MV Al Murtada' on 3rd July, 2002 in position 84 nautical miles west of Ratnagiri (110 nautical miles south of Mumbai). Coast Guard Ship Vijaya was sailed to monitor the movements of the vessel and boarded her on 6th July, 2002 and subsequently anchored the ship about 5 nautical miles of Devgarh (155 nautical miles south of Mumbai). During the preliminary search of the vessel, two AK 47 rifles with words "ALLAH" and "YUSUF" inscribed in Urdu were recovered. On further rummaging, 3 loaded magazines of AK 47 bore (74 rounds) were also recovered. An Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team of Navy also embarked the ship on 9th July, 2002 to sanitise the vessel of any explosives. None were found. As intimated by International Maritime Bureau the last owner of the ship is Mr. Assem Nidal Beaini, Lebanon.